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ABSTRACT

Almost 300 non-migrant, migrant, return migrant, and circulatory migrant high school students participated in a study of the relationship of the level of adjustment to mainstream Puerto Rican society and the frequency of migration. No direct relationship between reading achievement and physical adjustment was found. However, as the level of cultural adjustment increased, evidence of physical adjustment became more noticeable. A relationship was also discovered between reading achievement in Spanish and school adjustment, but none between reading achievement and social adjustment. Return migrant students were found not to have developed reading skills in Spanish at the same rate as those who never migrated. Differences between nonmigrants and circulatory migrants in reading achievement indicated that mobility greatly impaired the acquisition of second language reading skills. There were no differences between the groups in physical adjustment. A performance of the Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis suggested that the best predictor of reading achievement was school adjustment. A negative relationship between physical adjustment and reading achievement suggested that achievement will increase as soon as physical adjustment occurs. (RDN)

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THE EFFECTS OF MIGRATION ON READING ACHIEVEMENT, PHYSICAL, SOCIAL AND SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT ON A GROUP OF MIGRANT AND NON-MIGRANT PUERTO RICAN ADOLESCENTS\1

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INTRODUCTION

Puerto Rico became a territory of the United States in 1898. In 1917 the people of Puerto Rico were granted American citizenship. From 1898 to 1947 the educational policies of the island were formulated by the Department of Interior in Washington, D.C. One of the policies recommended that because the island was located between North and South America, that the Puerto Rican people should be bilingual (English and Spanish).

In 1947 Puerto Rico was granted control of its own educational system. In the years 1945-48, there was a gradual transition to Spanish as the medium of instruction. Cafferty and Rivera Martinez (1981) indicate that English for speaking purposes was not needed for the majority of Puerto Ricans and that only a limited number of potential emigrants to the United States would profit from instruction in English.

At the same time that Spanish became the official language of instruction, the government of Puerto Rico, in conjuction with the U.S. Department of Labor, began a program to encourage u..employed persons to migrate to the mainland United States, resulting in a dramatic increase of Puerto Rican migrants to New York and other urban cities in easte n United States.

Migration to the United States was caused primarily by a need to improve the economic conditions. Puerto Ricans, as American citizens, had relative few difficulties in traveling to the United States in search of an improvement in their economic status.

The great migration of Puerto Ricans to the United States ocurred during the 1950s, when there was promise of employment on the mainland. Migration decreased in the mid 1960s when the promise of employment decreased. Many Puerto Ricans returned to the Island in the late 1960s and the 1970s because they could not find work on the mainland. Return migration has continued for the last 12 years.

According to the 1980 U.S. Census of the Population, there were over 2,004,961 Puerto Ricans residing in the mainland United States and another 3.1 million residing in the Island. A salient characteristic of both the U.S. Puerto Rican community and the Island Puerto Rican community was the rapid rate of growth. The 1980 Census figure for the U.S. Puerto Rican population represents an increase of 41 percent over 1970 when the population was estimated at 1.4 million. For the Island the 1980 figure represents an increase of 17.8 percent over 1970 when the population was established at 2.7 million. The Planning Board of Puerto Rico indicates that much of the increase in population in the last decade can be attributed to return migration (Junta de Planificacion, 1982).

The problems of the migrant student population in Puerto Rico are not simple. The migrant student population is composed of migrants, return migrants, and circulatory migrants.

The migrant population is composed of those students born in the mainland, but whose parents are Puerto Ricans who have come to the Island in search of their roots. The return migrants are those born in Puerto Rico who have moved to the Mainland and returned to the Island once again. The circulatory migrants are those children of Puerto Rican parents who have traveled to and from the Island to the Mainland several times.

Cafferty and Rivera-Martinez (1981) report that the Puerto Rican migrant is a circulatory migrant, traveling within his/her own country, yet, at the same time, traveling back and forth between two linguistic cultures. They indicate that the Puerto Ricans who travel between the Island and the Mainland are not served by either educational system.

Among the circulatory migrants, who may spend a whole life traveling back and forth between the Island and the Mainland, are seasonal-agricultural workers (Fernandez de Cintron and Vales, 1975). Another group is comprised of semi-skilled or skilled workers who move from their small towns in the Island to the large cities in the Mainland and who find that there skills are inadequate to obtain employment in the complex industrial society of the United States.

A program which serves the circulatory migrant students is the Puerto Rico Migrant Education Program. During the 1982-83 school year, there were 10,340 students receiving services from this program (Department of Education of Puerto Rico, 1983).

RETURN MIGRATION

Bovenkerk (1974) describes migration as the return of people to their country of origin after emigration for the first time. He defines the "to and from" movement between two places which includes more than one return as circulation.

Migration from Puerto Rico to the mainland increased significantly in the 1950s. In the late 1950s visiting from Puerto Rico to the United States became frequent, and many persons did not decide if the purpose of their trip was to migrate or just to visit friends and relatives until they were on the Mainland. Many intended permanent migrants became temporary while other migrants intended to be temporary became permanent.

Usually three factors are mentioned that will influence return migration (Bovenkerk, 1974). These factors are: the shorter the distance of emigration, the higher the incidience of return migration; the longer the emigrants stay away, the less chance they will return; and changes in the economic balance between the place of origin and the place of destination directly affect the volume of return migration.

The economic motives affect very little the returning of migrants (Gmelch, 1980). Appleyard (1962) and Richardson (1963) suggest that strong family ties and homesickness are the main reasons for returning. Such is the case with Puerto Ricans. Myers and Masnick (1968) found that prospective Puerto Rican return migrants maintained stronger ties with Puerto Rico than those who wanted to stay in the United States. Hernandez Alvarez (1967) reported that about one-fourth of the Puerto Rican return migrants were highly successful people and the rest were persons of modest social levels who found they could not manage the migration situation.

PUERTO RICAN RETURN MIGRATION

The number of return migrants to Puerto Rico has been increasing since the mid 1960s. Fitzpatrick and Travieso (1981) indicate that Puerto Rican migration has changed in character and large numbers of Puerto Ricans are returning to the Island, although the constant flow back and forth continues. This constant flow back and forth is most clearly reflected in the transfers in and out of school children. The Department of Education of Puerto Rico (1981) reported that there were 59,812 students in public schools in Puerto Rico for school year 1979-80 who had lived in the United States for three years or more. This represented about about eight percent of the total enrollment in the public schools of Puerto Rico.

Most of the return migrant students are found in the intermediate and high school levels. It seems that this population is in need of school activities that foster acquiring Spanish and adapting to the Puerto Rican society.

ADJUSTMENT OF THE RETURN MIGRANT STUDENT

Adjustment is the process through which people deal with the needs of everyday life. Goodstein and Lanyon (1979) indicate that the process of adjustment involves the satisfaction of motives and needs, the resolution of frustration and conflict, and the reduction of drives or tensions. Adjustment problems arise when there is a conflict between meeting the individual's own needs and the demands on the situation.

There are two types of literature concerning the adjustment of the migrant student population. On the one hand, children of return migrants are reported as hating school, disliking their teachers, feeling a lack of identity, not knowing if they are Puerto Ricans or Americans, facing language and cultural problems, feeling lost, and wanting to return to the United States. This early literature consists of reports and articles in the local newspapers in Puerto Rico.

In 1978, Ramos Perea reported the results of a study he conducted with return migrants. He found that the returning migrant showed a lack of confidence, suffered from feelings of inferiority, had low self esteem, and had a lower opinion that non-migrants with regard to the organization and internal functioning of the school. Pacheco, Lucca and Wapner (1980) found that return migrants had a feeling of rejection, ambivalence as to their national identity, and they did not understand the culture and customs of Puerto Rico. These conflicts which the returning migrant faces in Puerto Rico seem to create the adjustment problems.

On the other hand, there is literature that points out that the return migrant has in effect adjusted well to school. Santa Pinter (1980) indicates that the return migrant students have no problems of socialization when returning to Puerto Rico, and they feel accepted by the community. Colon Colon (1982) found no major effects upon self esteem attributable to migration in Puerto Rican return migrant students. These two students were conducted with students who were in the last year of high school or in college.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

When Puerto Ricans return to the Island, they have to adjust to another social system. Prewitt Diaz and Rodriguez (1981) indicate that expectations vary among different social and cultural groups. A behavior in one group may be considered adaptive, when in another group it is maladaptive.

A source of conflict in the adjustment of Puerto Rican return migrant is the difference in cultural values of the two settings in which the return migrant student has to live. Nogueras and Prewitt Diaz (1981) describe this phenomenon as children with the same cultural roots but with different cultural patterns. The Department of Education of Puerto Rico (1983) indi-

cates that the return migrant exhibit a different outlook on life than the outlook of the mainstream of Puerto Rican society. Many times, these cultural traits come into conflicts with those prevailing on the Island. The cultural diversity experienced by the returning migrant provokes voluntary isolation and the formation of sub-cultural groups among these students.

PHYSICAL ADJUSTMENT

Pacheco, Lucca and Wapner (1980) indicate that migration implies a series of drastic changes for the individual going from one place to another. Migrants face changes in the physical, social and cultural environments.

Migration, as a source of drastic changes in the individual's physical, social, environmental, and cultural world, can cause physical disorders. Anxiety or stress often involves a substantial disruption of the physical functioning of the individual. The more continuous the anxiety stimulus, the more continuous the physical disruption (Goodstein and Lanyon, 1979). Many Puerto Rican migrant students face stress daily and therefore use the physical ailments as a defense to avoid and escape school if it presents too much stress.

The return migrant student learns early in life that when ill, much concern is expressed over his/her welfare and he/she receives more affection than at other times. Puerto Rican migrants might feel the need for affection in an often hostile society and therefore show signs of hypochondriasis or exagerate physical symptoms.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study assumes that the level of adjustment to the mainstream of Puerto Rican society is affected by the frequency of migration. This study attempted to measure the reading achievement [illegible] the physical, school and social adjustment of students who are migrant, non-migrant, return migrant, and circulatory migrants.

METHOD

Sample: The subjects were randomly selected from seven school districts throughout the Island. A total of 273 students participated in the study: 52 were categorized as non-migrants, 53 were migrants, 41 were return migrants, and 127 were circulatory migrants. The students selected for this study were high school students, grades 10 to 12, and their ages ranged from 15 to 18 years.

Procedure: The subjects were administered two instruments: (1) the Interamerican Test of Reading, Spanish version, level 4, to

assess reading achievement in Spanish; (2) the Inventario de Adaptacion Cultural (Cultural Adaptation Scale) to assess physical, school and social adjustment. A questionaire to obtain demographic information was also administered.

Instrumentation: Interamerican Test of Reading, Spanish version, level 4, was constructed to assess a comparable measure of ability and achievementin a bilingual setting. It was designed for the proposed age range of the students in the study and can be easily administered in a group. The test consists of three parts: vocabulary, level of comprehension, and speed of comprehension. The KR 20 coefficient of reliability for the toal test was .84.

The Inventario de Adaptacion Cultural, (Cultural Adaptation Scale) (Seilhamer and Prewitt Diaz, 1983). This scale consist of 100 items based upon a self report format. All items were presented in Spanish. The subjects answered "like me" or "unlike me." The items for this scale were adapted from the Hypochondriasis Scale of the MMPI, the Social Difficulty Scale (Furnham and Bochner, 1982) and the Cultural Adjustment Scale (Prewitt Diaz, 1980). The alpha coefficent of reliability was .78.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A hypothesis which attempted to determine if there was a relationship between reading achievement and physical, school and social adjustment was formulated. The first sub-hypothesis attempted to determine if there existed a relationship between reading achievement and physical adjustment. This hypothesis was rejected. Although there is currently no evidence in the literature that substantiates a direct relationship between reading and physical adjustment, there is evidence that physical adjustment affects adjustment to school (Canino, Earley, and Rogler, 1980; Robles, Martinez and Moscoso, 1981; and Pacheco, Lucca and Wapner, 1980).

There seems to exist a relationship between physical adjustment and cultural adjustment (r= .31). As the level of cultural adjustment increased, evidence of physical adjustment became more noticeable. This suggests that as a person feels more comfortable in a new environment, the willingness to verbalize physical symptomatology increases. Another factor which might explain this relationship is that as the student begins to have a grasp of the Spanish language, there might be a willingness to express physical symptomatology to teachers and school personnel.

The second sub-hypothesis proposed that a relationship existed between reading achievement and school adjustment. This subhypothesis was accepted. This shows that there exists a relationship between reading achievement in Spanish and school adjustment.

A third sub-hypothesis, which indicated that there was a relationship between reading achievement and social adjustment, was rejected. However, there exists a relationship between social adjustment and school adjustment. The higher the social adjustment, the higher the adjustment to school. This subhypothesis is supported by the literature (Ramos Perea, 1972; Eppink, 1979) on migrant adaptation.

The second hypothesis which attempted to determine if a discrepancy existed between groups on reading achievement and cultural adjustment, was divided into four subhypotheses. The first sub-hypothesis attempted to determine if there were differences between groups with regard to reading achievement in Spanish. This sub-hypothesis was rejected. Differences existed between the group of non-migrants and the group of return migrants. This suggested that students who have migrated to the United States and have returned to the Island have not developed the reading skills in Spanish at the same rate as those who never migrated.

There were differences between non-migrants and circulatory migrants in reading achievement. It seems that mobility has greatly impaired the process of second language acquisition as it relates to reading in this group of students. The results indicate that there is a relationship between types of migration and place of birth ($r = .37$). These findings suggest that there is a large number of young people with serious reading problems in their primary school language (English) and the second language (Spanish).

Further analysis was performed to determine if there were any differences on the subscales of the Spanish reading test. Significant group differences were found between non-migrants and the three groups of migrant students. It is apparent that the differences in vocabulary affected the performance of the circulatory migrant on tasks which required reading ability.

The second sub-hypothesis which indicates that there was no difference between the groups in physical adjustment, was accepted. The third sub-hypothesis which attempted to determine if there existed any difference between the groups in school adjustment, was accepted.

To determine which phase of cultural adaptation was the best predictor of reading achievement a Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis was performed. This analysis suggested that the best predictor of reading achievement was school adjustment. A negative relationship between physical adjustment and reading achie-

vement suggests that achievement in reading will increase as soon as the physical adjustment takes place.

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